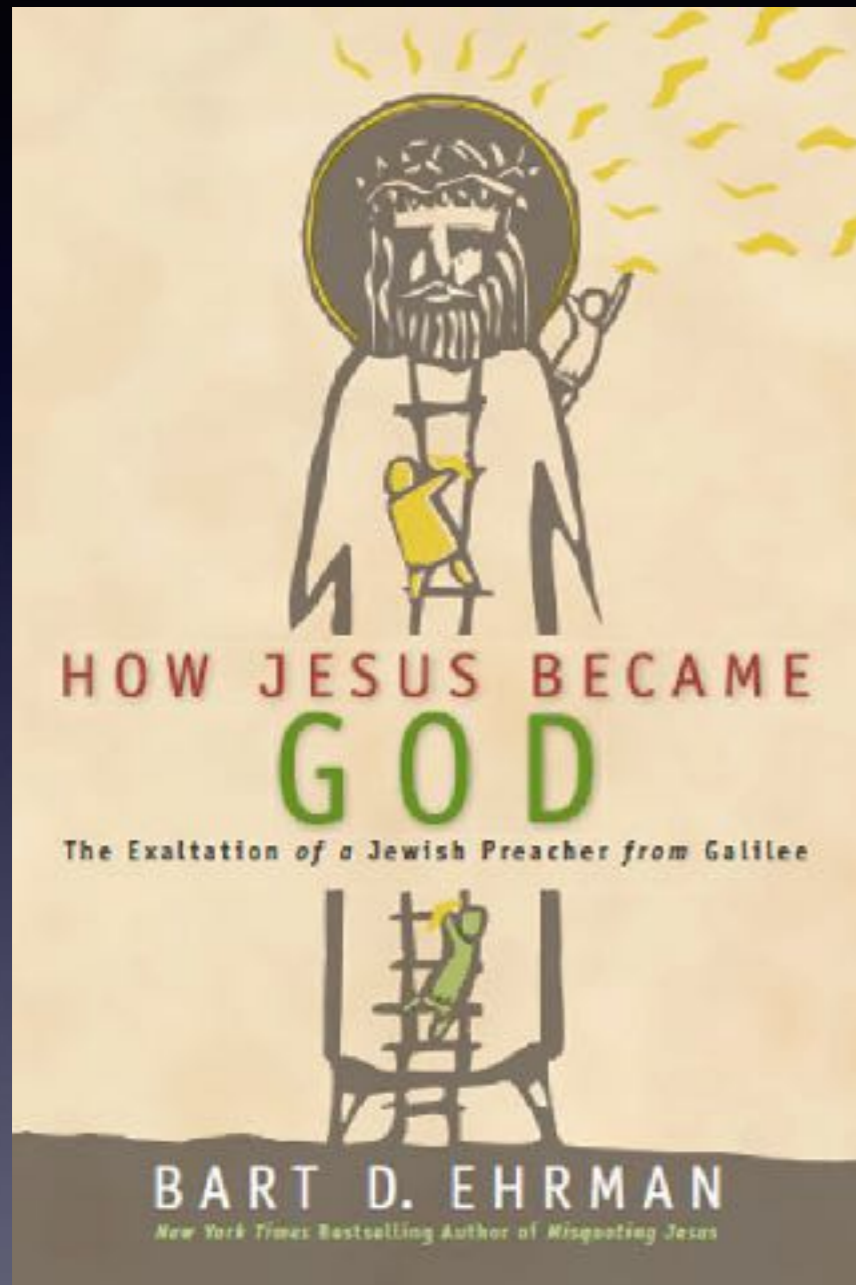


How Jesus Became God

ACTS

Winter 2017

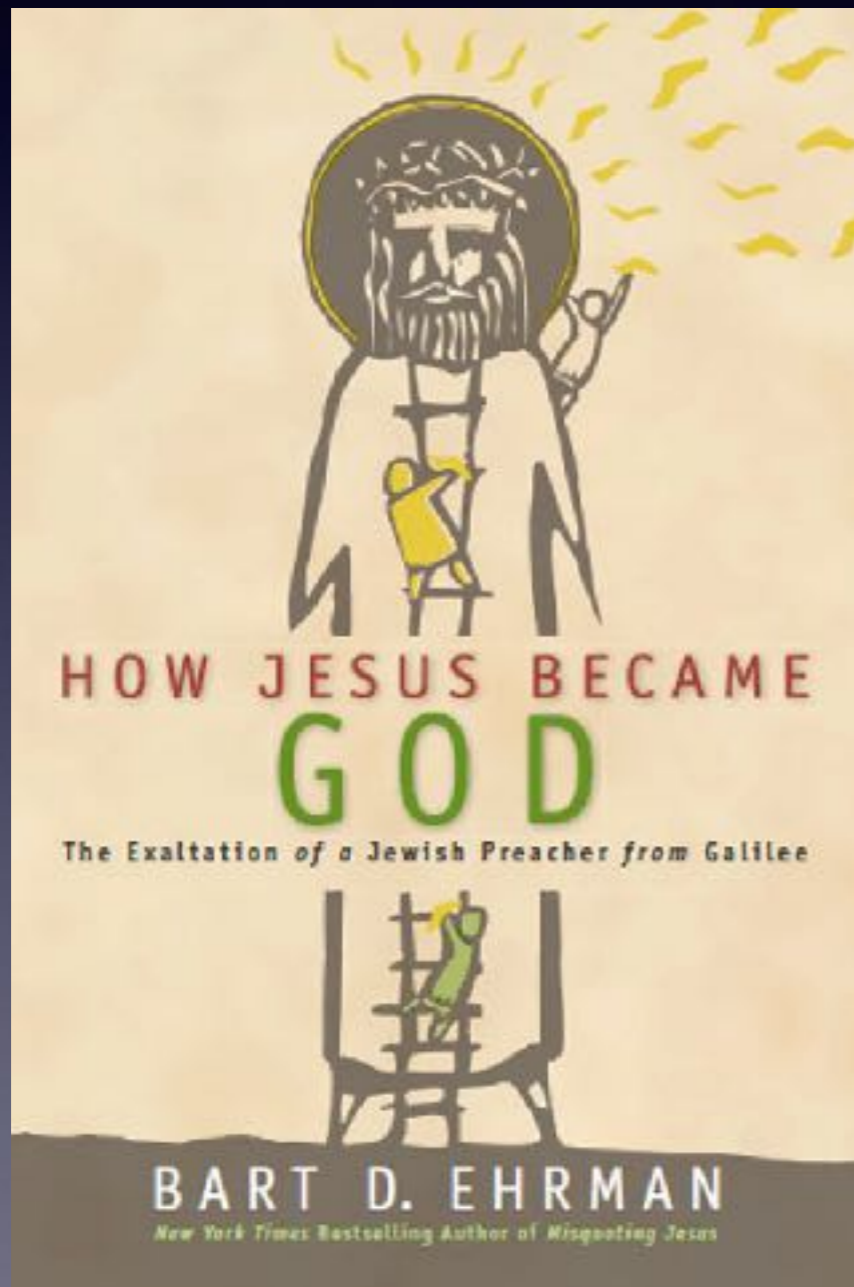
St David's United Church
Calgary



How Jesus Became God

Chapter 2

Divine Humans in Ancient Judaism



Session # 3

- Opening
- Presentation
- Break
- Video - PBS
- Discussions
- Closing

Opening



“A candle loses nothing
by lighting another candle.”

Fr James Keller.

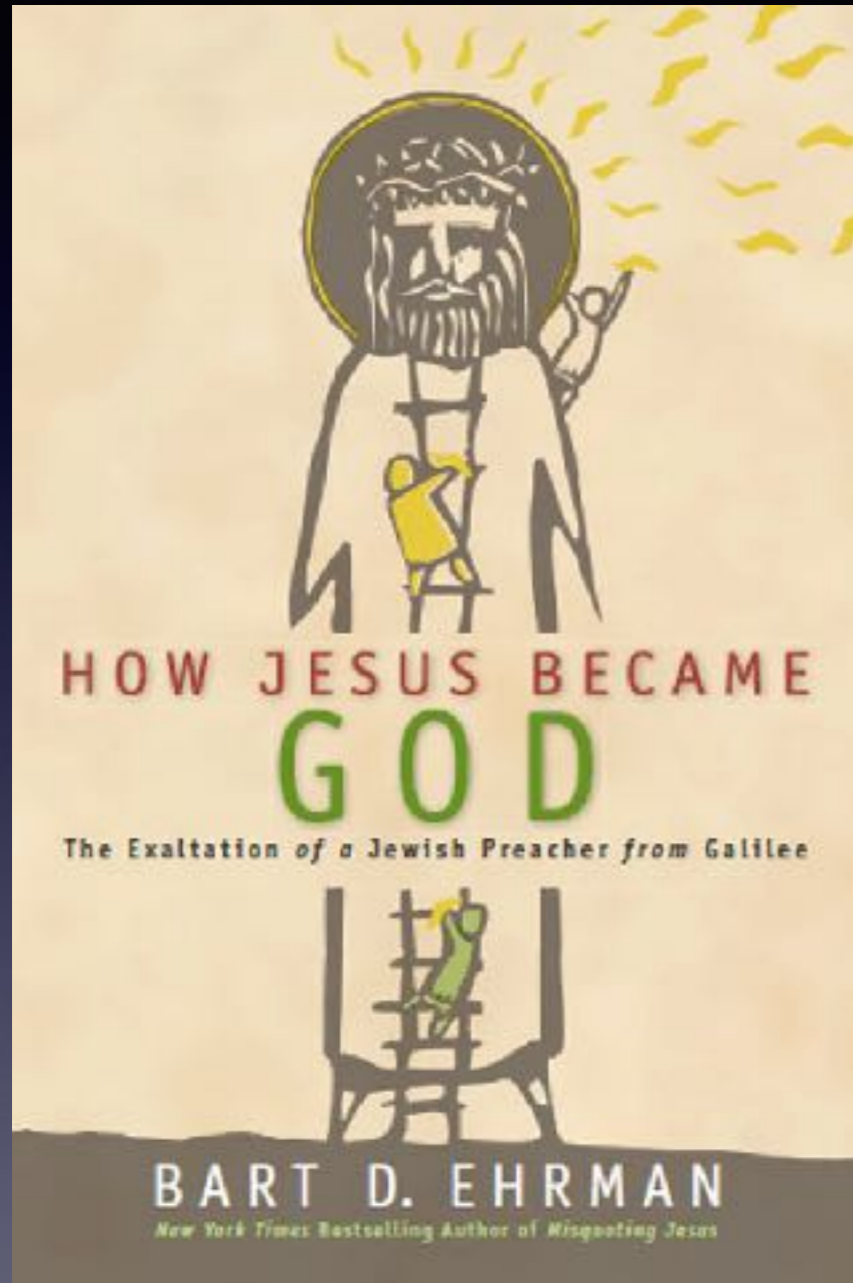


Holy Manners Bookstudy 38

How Jesus Became God

Chapter 2

Divine Humans in
Ancient Judaism



Review of Ch 1:

Last week we focused on Egyptian, Greek and Roman mythology as a backdrop to our study of how Jesus became God in the development of the early Christian church.



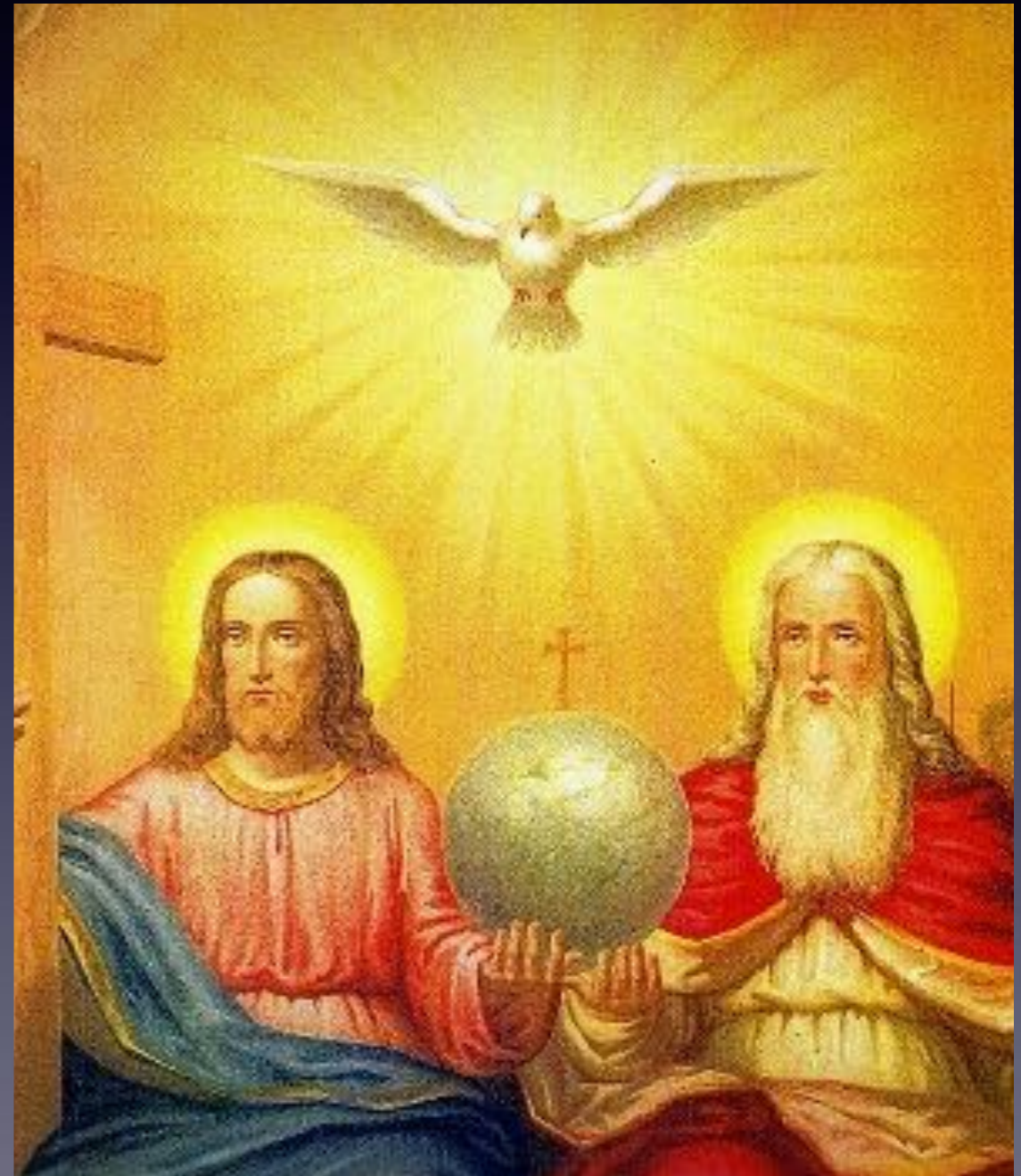
Review of Ch 1:

We also focused on how these themes - deeply embedded in the Judeo-Christian tradition - continue to influence us today.



Introduction to Ch 2: Divine Humans in Ancient Judaism

Erhman's key point in this chapter is that there is considerable internal and external evidence that Jesus became a god as a natural outgrowth of developments in the Hebrew bible tradition.



Introduction to Ch 2: Divine Humans in Ancient Judaism

External - means evidence from pagan sources outside Christianity.

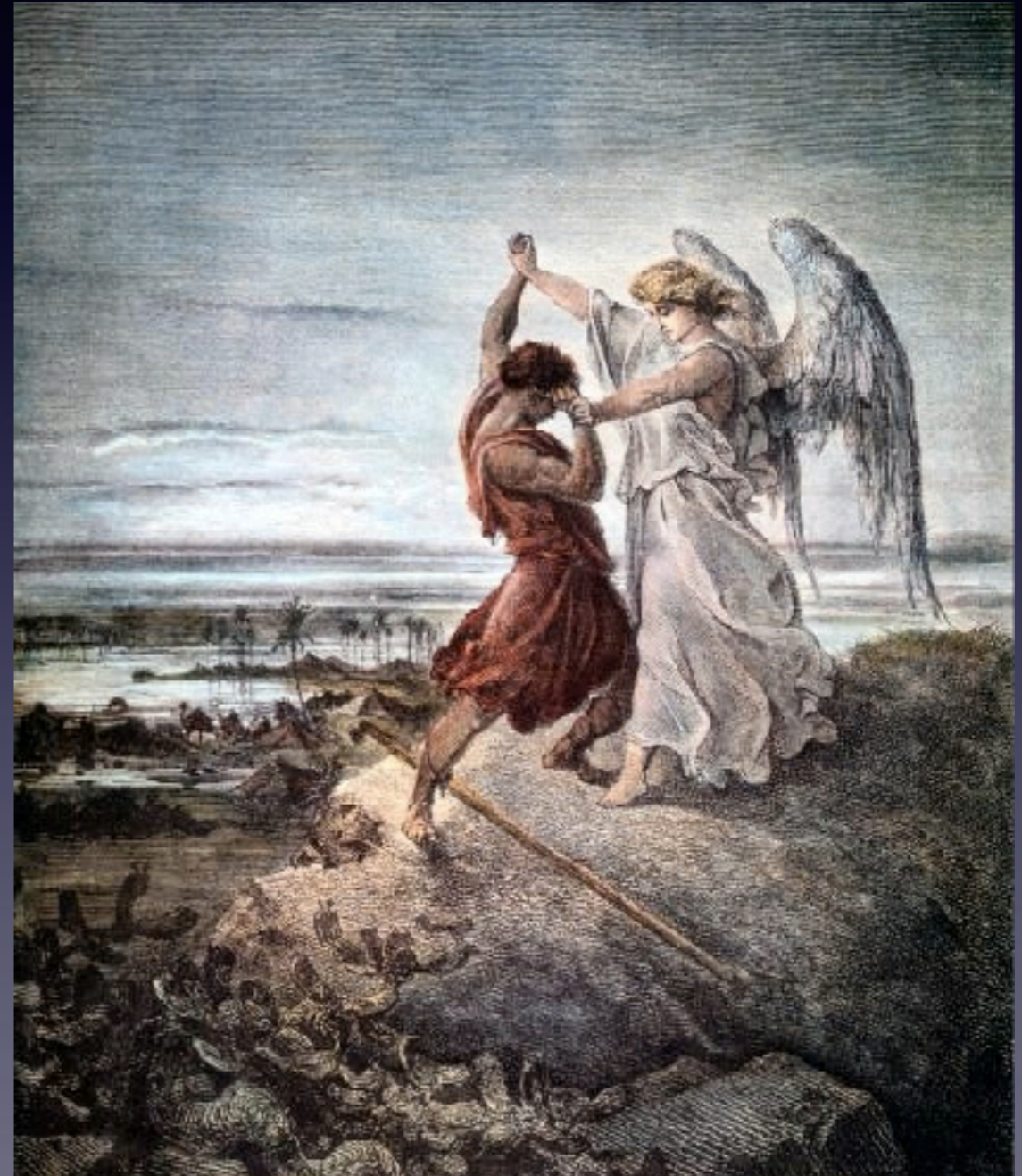
(The Olympian Gods)



Introduction to Ch 2: Divine Humans in Ancient Judaism

Internal - means
evidence from the
Hebrew influence
on Christianity

(Jacob wrestling the Angel)



Introduction to Ch 2: Divine Humans in Ancient Judaism

Our focus tonight is on how the Hebrew tradition, so strongly monotheist - was at the same time positing divinities beyond the One True God of the biblical witness.



Introduction to Ch 2: Divine Humans in Ancient Judaism

Most Hebrews believed in a continuum of divinities who, while not equal to God, still had divine attributes.

What emerged in Judaism, continued in Christianity.

(next - God creating Adam - Sistine Chapel)



All this happened with both religions still claiming to be monotheist.



Monotheism

In the Hebrew biblical tradition, God was the epitome and ultimate point of the pyramid of divinity but there were lower sources of divinity as well.

This point would be strongly debated by biblical scholars.





"No other gods before him? —
What about *multiculturalism*?"

Discussion

- There were divine beings who temporarily became human
- Divine beings who beget semi-divine beings (and)
- Humans who became divine.

Monotheism

Because Christianity grew out of the Hebrew tradition it was possible for Christians to see Jesus as God because of evidence within their own biblical heritage.



Monotheism

There are examples from the Hebrew bible such as -

Angelic beings are described as gods

Humans can become angels.

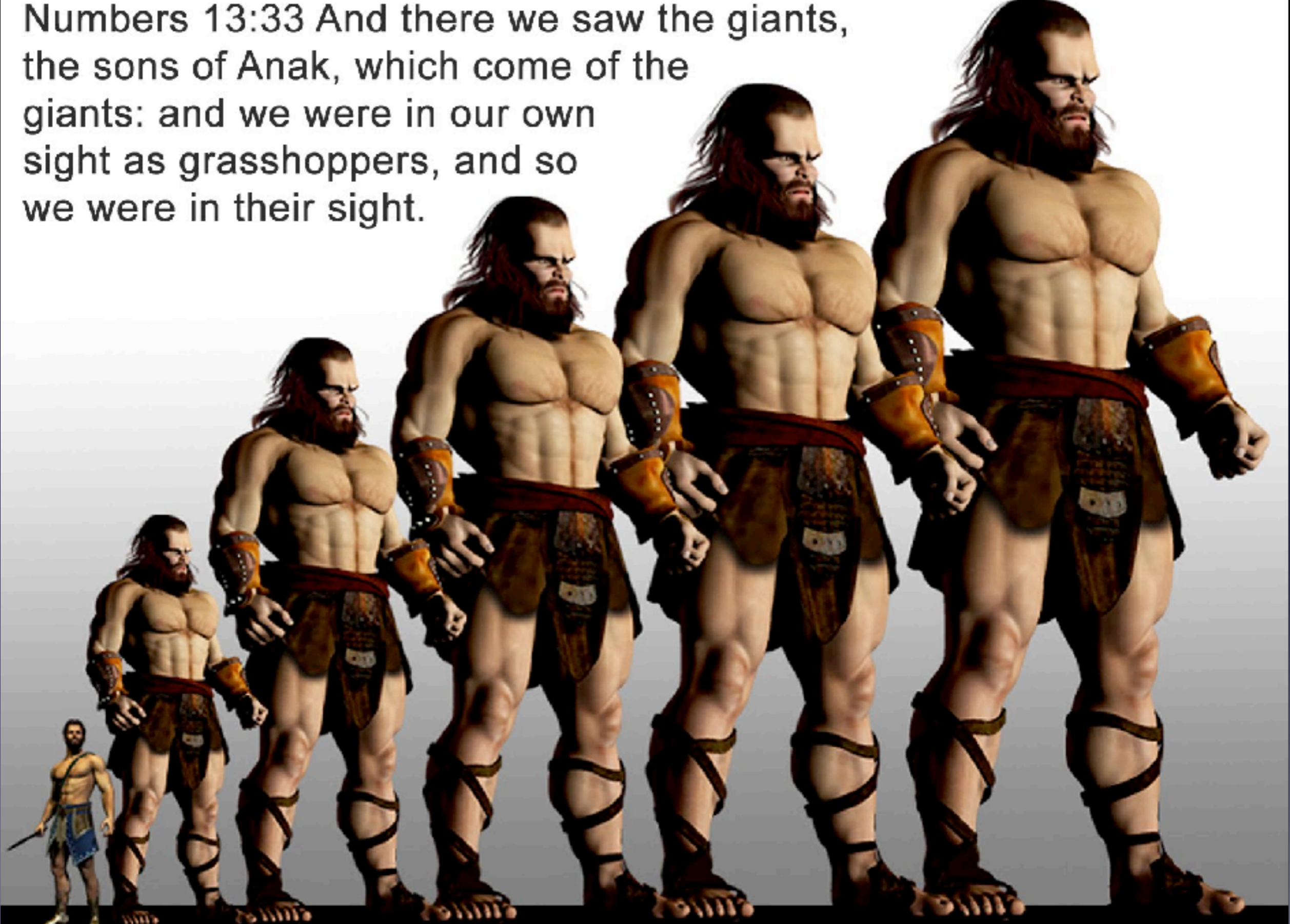
Jesus could be described as an angel in human form.



Monotheism

God beget gods through humans - for example, the "Nephilim", who walked this earth (pp 62-3) at the time of Noah and who were destroyed in the great flood (Genesis 6)

Numbers 13:33 And there we saw the giants,
the sons of Anak, which come of the
giants: and we were in our own
sight as grasshoppers, and so
we were in their sight.



6'

Average
Man

12'

Og of Bashan
Goliath Scale

18'

24'

Early Canaanite Giants Scale
See Amos 2:9

30'

36'





*Computers are like Old Testament gods;
lots of rules and no mercy.*

Joseph Campbell

Monotheism

Stories about Noah and the great flood are very common in the mythology of the Ancient Near East.

There is little that is unique about the biblical story.



Discussion

It would be possible to do rewarding word studies on biblical terms such as:

- "Hypostasis"
- "Wisdom"
- "Word"
- "personification"
- "icon"

Debate about religious art as replication or symbol.



Monotheism

Or, for interest, compare
Genesis 1:1 “In the
beginning God created the
heavens and the earth.”

and John 1:1 “In the
beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.”

Compare the divine logos of
Hebrew/Wisdom and
Greek/Platonic traditions



Philo of Alexandria

- The great assimilator of Greek and Hebrew philosophy and mythology
- A contemporary of Jesus, 25 BCE - 50 CE, but no mention of Jesus.
- Alexandrian Jewish Leader, Philosopher, Stoic and Platonist
- He saw “The Logos” as a fusion of Jewish and Greek ideas. As man’s Platonic Type, a divine intermediary, an archetypal idea.
- God is ineffable, and seen as NOT being what people thought.



Monotheism

In Judaism, humans could become divine by “walking” and “conversing” with God - for example Enoch, Moses



Monotheism

After Philo's take on Moses as 'god', it was not a stretch for Christians to view Jesus as god also.
(pp. 83-4)

(Transfiguration)



Basic Question

In what "sense" do you think it could be possible to view Jesus as God from this background in Hebrew biblical tradition?



Discussion

Why Persist with Religious Perceptions

Lloyd Geering

Video - excerpt 3m

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Evnai04nIX4&>



Discussion

Next Readings

Session 4 - 13 Feb 2017

Chapter 3. Did Jesus Think He Was God?

Study Website

<http://hjbg.stdavidscalgary.net>

Closing



"I can only trust that even oppressive darkness cannot snuff the light cast from many tiny flames of truth."

Melanie Jean Juneau